

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"



Volume XXVII, Number 6, December 1976

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880 - 1956)

OUR PURPOSE: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of Fellowship among mankind.

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THIS PUBLICATION: SOME NOTES IN PASSING. . .

BECAUSE OF its name, and because of its Purpose which is regularly printed at the top of the inside-cover to the left, if not simply because of its contents from this page to the last, I would have thought more people would know what it's all about. . . . No, ma'm, this is not a magazine of poetry. Nor is it the spokesman for, defender against, or supporter of any one faith in which any of us may have happened to be born and raised. Our name says it all, really. It's as simple as that. . . . I don't believe the editor really ought to have to say that it is none of our business to be against anything, whether it be free-verse, rhymes, or aspects of Buddhism disturbing to certain Protestant canons. It is our business to be *for* each other no matter who, where, or in spite of what. This is always our business, not just at this time of year. . . .

THE WRITINGS you find in these pages—with the exception now and then of something selected to provide some sort of information that seems useful or pertinent at the moment—are all unsolicited. The words you see set in type have first been written down by men and women endeavoring to express an adventure they have had in the spirit. (To me, a poem or a story is just as capable of expressing these matters as an article of philosophical inquiry or a meditation or prayer.) The fact is that I regard this publication as a record of spiritual adventures taking place in many parts of the world. I would like for it to be a diary of as many different adventures of as many different people as can be crammed in its thirty-six pages. . . . In my estimation, the writing-abilities involved are of secondary importance to the accuracy and sincerity of the adventures reported. As you may have noticed, these abilities often are considerable. Which leads me to wonder if there is a correla-

tion between the ability and the spirituality or at least the longing for it. . . . As for the pride that goes with the satisfaction of doing something well, perhaps we all have to work on getting rid of that. Since the truth is ultimately the same for all of us, what do our precious bylines stand for but the degree to which we failed to arrive at it yet. —Anonymous

LET ME HOLD HIM *Emma S. McLaughlin*

Let me hold Him, Mary,
you have held Him long,
through countless years of starry nights
joyous with angel song.
Your arms must be so weary!
my arms are young and strong.

Don't just stand there waiting!
Bring the infant in;
the road lies deep in drifted snow
and swaddling cloths are thin.
This is no time for you to be
wandering about with Him.

I've redeemed my green stamps
for a little sheet
that fits the crib my children used;
I washed it, heaven-sweet --
and there's a small, gray kitten
to curl beside His feet.

Look! His eyes shine brighter
than our Christmas tree.
When He is settled for the night
we'll have a cup of tea.
O joy of my desiring,
God's Son is here — with me.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS by Reuben L. Musey

AMERICA! AMERICA! God Shed His Grace on Thee. . . .

PROLOGUE. . . . The old year ends—the bicentennial year for the United States of America. The third century has begun.

Reviewing the virtues of our American heritage and honoring those who made it possible, in retrospect let us vision America is speaking to all of us. . . . Mainstream. . . America is saying: I was two-hundred years old July 4! The day I was born, fifty-six patriots risked their lives and fortunes so I would have life. On that July day the thirteen English colonies were converted into the thirteen united states. My birth-certificate is the Declaration of Independence. The closing of that document I wish all of you to think about at this moment: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and sacred honor." I looked forward to my two-hundredth birthday because I know I was the inspiration for which the patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

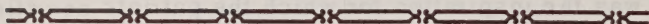
Reflecting back, in my infancy I was nurtured by toil, suffering, and dedicated spirit. . . . I remember Paul Revere on that April night before I was born, and Lexington green where the shot was fired that was heard around the world. . . . I respect the memory of Washington, who led me through those first days of the new republic; Jefferson, who drafted the historic document, my birth-certificate; Hale, the schoolteacher, who regretted he had "but one life to lose" for me; Generals Lee and McClellan; and Lincoln, the emancipator, who bound the wounds of a nation "with malice for none—with charity for all" I recall the Alamo, Pearl Harbor, and Iwo Jima, where "uncommon valor was a common virtue."

Millions of unsung Americans played a fundamental part in my progress. Many gave their lives on battlefields and are now resting in the Argonne Forest, Flanders Field, on the rock at Corregidor, and the bleak slopes of Korea. At Arlington is buried in

a tomb the Unknown Soldier, where is inscribed the words: "Here rests in honored glory a soldier known but to God". . . . Most of my documents of government, the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution, give recognition to God. Without God there could be no form of government or way of life for my people. The Founding Fathers saw it, and with God's help it will continue to be.

Thus I ask you to try to remember, as you take the step forward into the third century, why I was founded, why it was believed there was a better way, and the concern that those who gave me birth felt for the individual and his freedom. This is my prayer. . . . my wish. . . . my goal. . . .

Reuben L. Mussey



BICENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS PRAYER

Dennis Barry Carroll

OUR FATHER in heaven, as the new year dawns, we pray proclaiming in unison and concert in every rural village, town, and city to the people of all lands the dedication of our nation and our people the firm belief that we are the people of a land where the wanderer finds shelter and rest. America, the home of the free and the blest!

CHRISTMAS

FOR CHRISTOPHER

Emily Sargent Councilman

"IT HAS TO BE GREEN," Chris told Mommy on Christmas Eve on the way to the store. "It has to be a green tree for Bee-Bob. But it has to shine, too."

"We will look till we find the one you want," Mommy said, going into the big store crammed with jostling people, mostly big people moving in the aisles or crowded against the piled-up counters. So many big people kept pushing against them, Chris hung back a little, keeping close to Mommy. "Mommy, are you sure we can't get a real tree for Bee-Bob, like. . . like the little ones in the woods behind our house? Like our Christmas tree at home, only not so big? Just a little tree?"

Mommy sighed, "No, Chris. You remember the nurse told us the hospital doesn't allow flowers, or trees, in Intensive Care. They take up too much room. All the people in there are very sick—"

"Like Bee-Bob?"

Mommy nodded, but after a while went on, "There has to be room for all kinds of machines to help them. Some of them have a hard time breathing—"

"I know," Christ interrupted. "You have to have ox. . . oxygen to breathe. And flowers and trees have to have it, too." He giggled. "Real flowers and trees have to breathe, but arti . . . artificial trees *don't* have to!"

Mommy smiled. "Yes. Hold onto my hand. I don't want to lose you. Remember it must be a very small tree. The nurse said they are breaking the rules even so because it's Christmas, but it has to be—"

"I know," Chris broke in, "a very small tree."

Mommy was looking around, trying to see over the heads of

all the people. "Now, if we can just find the right counter. . . ."

At last. There it was. They finally made it through the crowd, and Chris held onto the counter top with both hands.

"But they are all so big. . . and silver. . . and pink! Not like a real tree," he murmured.

"Let's keep looking." Mommy reached down the counter. "Here. Look at this one."

Chris held it carefully, considering, "It's little, and green with white—snow, I guess." He turned it around and around.

"Is it all right?" Mommy asked.

"I guess. . . . But I wish it had a star."

Mommy kept on looking. "It seems to be the only one. But maybe Bee-Bob will remember about the star and pretend it's there and—"

"—and pretend the tree is a real tree with real snow," Chris added, smiling up into her face.

"Yes. Hold onto it while we look some more and make sure it's the one you want."

They did not find another one, but Chris liked this one better and better as he walked along, holding it very carefully, staying close to Mommy on the way to the checkout counter. He was pretending about the star, remembering how he and Bee-Bob used to talk about it, how it led to Bethlehem and the Baby Jesus. . . .

But suddenly he stopped short and pulled Mommy to the counter they were passing. "Wait, Mommy, look!" he pointed to the miniature manger-scene all in one piece. Quickly he put down the small tree and reached for the tiny creche—small enough to hold in his cupped hands, it contained the stable with its straw and sheep, kneeling shepherds, Joseph, Mary, and the Baby asleep on the hay, and even a tiny tree just outside the stable.

With the glow of discovery in his eyes and an urgency in his voice, he looked up to Mommy. "It's as small as the tree. Wouldn't they let Bee-Bob have it? Wouldn't they?"

And Mommy answered quickly and firmly, "Yes," watching the shine in Christopher's eyes, the gentleness of his hands

holding his treasure close.

"Look, Mommy. It has a battery that makes the star shine. Here's the way to turn it on. It lights up the tree and the Baby's face. Little Lord Jesus. . . ."

On the way to the hospital, Chris was very quiet, holding his gift for Bee-Bob. Mommy was quiet, too. Finally he said softly, "I wish. . . I could take it to him myself."

"Chris," Mommy began. . . .

"I know. I'm not old enough. The hospital rules. But Mommy, you be sure to show him how to turn on the star. He's sick and—"

"I'll remember."

"And Mommy, he *will* like it better than a tree. He will, I know."

"Yes, Chris. You know."

AT CHRISTMAS

Ruth K. Hall

Suppose this beatific season
when peace and joy pervade our lives
and hearts o'erflow with love and giving —
suppose it were a constant thing,
a state of daily living;
would it become too commonplace,
rejoicing, sharing, caring,
could we endure perpetual grace?

Or must we know the pangs of sorrow
from selfish acts or thoughts demanding,
to grasp the fullness of His gift?
Then with new understanding
might we not humbly seek to emulate
that perfect love, tomorrow and tomorrow.

SANTA CLAUS, THE EASTER BUNNY, AND GOD

Joan Elliott Pickart

EVERY MOTHER, when her child reaches seven or eight years, is faced with the query, "Are Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny real?"

I had been anticipating this, because my Emily had asked many questions after both holidays, such as: "Are you really sure Santa zooms back up the chimney?" and "Why did the Easter Bunny use the basket we had in the hall closet?"

So when the showdown came, I was ready. I gently explained that these fantasies were a wonderful part of being little and that helping them seem true was just as nice for grown-ups. A bit sad at first, she soon accepted this explanation, and all was well.

A few days later, as I sat mending, Emily wandered in. She plunked herself onto the floor and, after what was for her a long silence, asked, "Is God one of those make-believe things like Santa Claus?"

I was stunned by the question, but managed to stress that God was indeed a very real part of our lives.

Days later, I found myself still troubled about what she had said. I decided it was understandable that she should be wondering about the status of the Lord in her life. After all, didn't I tend to call on God mainly when there was a problem or a crisis? Hadn't I given Emily the impression that God will "fix it" if we pray hard enough. I recalled praying with her when her grandfather was ill, I did not remember saying prayers with her since his recovery. No wonder she was uneasy about where she stood on the issue. I had failed to bring the reality of His being into her daily life!

Changes were overdue, and I set about putting things right, although first I prayed to God and humbly begged His forgiveness. We started saying grace at meals again. I began taking

her on walks to show her all the gifts from God that surround us. Nightly I hear her prayers for those in need and also her thanks for blessings she has received. At Sunday School she is enthralled by the stories about Jesus.

Things have their right priorities now in our house. I am glad I stopped to examine the picture of God I was presenting to my child, because she no longer has a special-occasion relationship with Him as she did with Santa and the Easter Bunny.

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

Heather McLaughlin

In 1964, Heather McLaughlin, daughter of Contributing Editor Emma S. McLaughlin, was studying at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. Although much time has elapsed since then, her Christmas letter was full of so many interesting happenings that her parents decided, with her permission, to share it.

DEAR FRIENDS:

Many of you have sent me letters about your holiday preparations and plans at home, so it seems only fair that I tell you a bit about how I spent my Christmas vacation.

I attended a week's work-camp sponsored by the University Christian Center in Beit Jala, Jordan. We stayed at the Mennonite School for Boys, where fifteen of us laid a sidewalk from the back door of the school to the boys' wash-house, painted the school kitchen, and put goal-posts in on their new soccer field. We worked from seven o'clock each morning until lunch-time at one thirty and the rest of the day was free for planned sightseeing.

One day we had the opportunity to visit a United Nations camp for Palestinian refugees. We were guests in classes where

fifth- and sixth-grade boys were studying English. They had studied the language for only a year but were able to converse with us quite well. We also saw the modern and well-equipped wood and metal shops financed by the United Nations which seek to prepare the children to support themselves on leaving school. All the children seemed eager, alert, and anxious to learn.

On another day we visited the tree-nursery and chicken-farm owned and operated by the Near East Christian Council. Here they raise the trees for reforestation, and the livestock, chickens and goats are for distribution to local villagers with the understanding that a certain percentage of laying hens plus the first female kid must be returned to perpetuate the farm.

The real highlight of my trip was the opportunity to spend Christmas Eve in Bethlehem. During the early evening I attended the YMCA service in The Shepherds' Field. The service itself was lovely and the night cool and crisp. Myriads of stars twinkled in the clear sky and it was easy to almost picture the star of Bethlehem among them. Although the service was beautiful, the field itself left much to be desired. It was a small area fenced in with barbed-wire to keep out everyone who did not have tickets. From the hill on which the field was located, you cannot see the "Little Town of Bethlehem." There was a flock of sheep (probably hired) and a few authentic shepherds outside the fence. During the service a lamb was born in the flock, and this seemed particularly beautiful and symbolic to me. After the service the shepherds' meal of bread and roast mutton was served in a natural cave on the hillside.

Following the service in Shepherds' Field, we went to Bethlehem and wandered the streets waiting for nine o'clock to come so that we could attend the Anglican carol-sing in the churchyard of the Church of the Nativity. The streets were filled with tourists, street-hawkers and vendors of all sorts. Bethlehem was neither the quiet nor the peaceful town of our carols. New Year's Eve in Times Square is nothing by comparison. One of the girls in our group, breaking into tears, expressed what all of us felt. "This just can't be Christmas Eve! Where is the quiet, the peace, the holy calm? Everything's too noisy and commercial for

Bethlehem!" One of the boys then pointed out that Bethlehem was terribly crowded on the first Christmas Eve—remember all the people coming to such a small town to pay taxes? In fact, Bethlehem was so crowded that "there was no room in the inn." The town couldn't have been all peace and quiet on the first Christmas. . . .

The carol-sing was lovely. Before the service, several of us bought candles and thus had our own candlelight-service in the churchyard. I honestly feel that this service in a sanctuary lighted only by God's candles in the sky was more beautiful than any service held in Harrisburg.

The four bravest of our group decided to spend a few more hours in Bethlehem and then fight the crowds to attend midnight mass in St. Catherine's Church, the Latin sector of the Church of Nativity. We knew tickets were necessary and we didn't have any, but we hoped to get in, anyway. The guard refused us, and as we stood to the side discussing what to do, some nice Franciscan friar came up and asked if we were planning to attend. We told him we wanted to but had no tickets. From under the folds of his long brown robe he produced four tickets. After thanking him, we went into the service.

The interior of the church was just as crowded as the street. We stood for one and a half hours of the two-hour mass. . . . The crowd was reverent and orderly but somehow did not seem to be worshipping but rather putting on a grand show for the tourists. At midnight "Joy to the World" was played, and a toy doll in an ornate glass was carried down the aisle and placed on the altar. . . . Arched about the chancel was a huge neon sign which flashed "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." The music of the mass was simply gorgeous, and we left somewhat disappointed but quite happy to have spent Christmas Eve in Bethlehem.

On the way back to Beit Jala, we passed a house on a narrow street in which the family were gathered around a brightly-burning fire. Near the house was a small stable sheltering a few animals. Could this have been the door opened to two tired strangers? Could that have been the stable where two travelers slept? Christmas means many things to many people, but to me it will

always mean the peace and love of God which has the power to reach out through the bustle of the city and again bring hope through the message of "Peace on Earth."

Best wishes for all happiness in the new year,

Heather McLaughlin

P.S. In case you think I was discouraged by spending Christmas in Bethlehem, you're wrong. I've already made my reservations to spend Easter in Jerusalem!

(Heather McLaughlin is now Mrs Thomas James Croke, of Taunton, Massachusetts, and the mother of Andrew and Susan.)

THE GIFT OF THE WHITE PINE

Eleanor Ebersole

WHAT makes a gift?" the pine tree asked.

"Color," the maple said. "Bright yellow and red."

"Russet and, of course, there are acorns," said the oak.

"Warm brown and black make an excellent gift," the woolly caterpillar added.

"Purple," said the aster, who also mentioned petals.

The crab grass, now partly light brown after the frost, muttered something inaudible. The blue grass, still green, talked about brightness and long life. The river added its chatter.

"Color is fickle," called the river, "but certainly blue suits me best."

The pine tree began to reason, "I have black and a touch of yellow and red in my bark, brown, as well as light brown, a bit of blue in my needles, russet, and white."

"White!" exclaimed the others. "That is overdoing it!"

"White," said the pine.

"Perhaps that is your gift," suggested the maple, referring to the pine's original question.

"Perhaps," said the pine. "Perhaps the greatest gift I have to give is white."

"What white?" asked the oak, rustling its russet leaves.

"But my purple. . . ," interrupted the aster. "No one has anything so fine."

The days grew colder. The time came for the gathering of gifts.

"Where is your gift?" twitted the maple, whose limbs had become bare. "You have certainly seen mine."

"And mine," growled the crab grass thoroughly brown from the most recent freeze.

"White is my gift," said the pine.

"Let us see it, then," demanded the others.

The gift was there! Each cone of the pine was now fringed white. The gift of winter color had come to the great white pine.



THE MESSAGE

Frances Brandon Neighbours

Through a dark window
 The radiance of the Star
 Above the city.
 I must go into the streets;
 My sandals have straw in them.

I REMEMBER

Marion J. Richardson

The tall, long-needle pine
was finally found
and brought home,
held on the side of the car
through a big snowstorm.
It was set up in the living room
and touched the ceiling --
so beautiful, it needed no trimming;
however, we trimmed it
with colored lights, tinsel,
and lovely, treasured ornaments,
placing a big star at the top,
symbolizing the one that lead
the shepherds to the manger
where Christ was born.
Gifts were wrapped
in colored paper
and tied with pretty bows,
then placed under the tree --
reminiscent of gifts brought
by the Wisemen to the Christ Child
on the eve of His birth.
Though we enjoyed Christmas
on the outside in the flesh,
the real joy was experienced
in the weaving of the outside
with the inside -- the gift of love
from Christ, instilling in us
our love for one another.



INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

Samuel M. Silver

OF COURSE interfaith marriages can work, but it's a hard row to hoe. In this age of ecumenism, which is another word for free and easy commingling, one expects love to cross religious lines. But because people of varying backgrounds can fall in love doesn't mean that they can stay in love.

What I have just written about the relationship between falling in love and remaining in love is true about any couple. But if you choose a partner from another faith you are doubling the risks of marital failure. The marriage fatality-rate is said to be one out of four. The rate for intermarriages has been cited as one out of two. So one should ponder deeply the hazards and obstacles involved in crossing religious or racial matrimonial lines. Of course, many who read this have already committed themselves to a future mate. And you who have made this decision are absolutely certain that you will make a "go" of your marriage. How do I know this? I know it because I meet dozens of young men and women who have fallen in love and are sure that nothing in the world will make them "fall out" again. Fine. But as you anticipate so many other eventualities in your future life it would be well for you to plan your religious future also.

This warning should be added to others you have received. Young people who are susceptible to a transreligious marriage are often those to whom religion means little. "Neither of us is religious, so why should religion become a factor in our lives?" is the way the question is often put. Well, if religion doesn't mean much to you, and you would like to keep it that way, the best thing you can do is to marry someone of your own faith. Two Christians often have little occasion to think about religion, except for the big holidays. Two Jews can virtually rule religion out of their lives, except for the big holydays. But when you are intermarried, religion, which you would like to keep in the background, intrudes itself into the foreground. When you are

going steady, your friends comment about it. When you are engaged, your parents may get into hassles about it. When you plan your ceremony, you will become all exercised about its religious (or non-religious) nature. After you are married, the subject of religion looms up in many ways. Each holiday, large or small, can be another pinprick. When the children come, then you are really in a dither.

So I repeat: People to whom religion means little would do well to marry someone of their own creed. Then they can prevent it from becoming Topic A. Often those who contemplate intermarriage base their sectarian decisions on the wellbeing of future children. But the problem should be ironed out not in terms of putative offspring but of the welfare of the couple itself. There are no hard and fast rules in this situation. Each case is separate and distinct, and you would do well, if you are in this category, to have a chat with a religious leader as soon as possible. Indeed, it would be advisable to see more than one minister, priest, or rabbi. Remember, the clergy is not unanimous on this matter either. You will get all kinds of counsel. Listen to everyone, and then reason out your own conclusions. In the event that one of the partners in an interfaith romance has a stronger attachment to religion than the other, it might be well for the one with weaker loyalties to transfer to the faith of the other. I say that because it is easier to resolve dilemmas of mixed background if the couple opts for one faith. Many couples, ostensibly broadminded, have a different outlook. They very often put it this way: "We respect each other's faith. My fiance will remain a member of his group, and I will continue to be what I am- And when we have children, we will let them choose the religion they prefer."

Sounds plausible and reasonable. And in some instances the arrangement proves successful. But in many cases it just doesn't work. Husband and wife ought to be more united; to have each linked to a different set of sanctities pulls them apart. As for the children, they are in no position to vote for a faith. They should grow up naturally in a religious milieu provided for them

by their parents. If their parents are divided religiously, they often face a kind of schizophrenia. Daddy has one faith, and Mommy another. In one institution the children may be told that those who do not subscribe to its precepts are "not saved" or are "doomed." So the children are led to believe that one of their own parents is somehow "different" from them. This may estrange them from one to whom they should be ineradicably bound.

So a good rule of thumb is that one family is big enough for one religion. Hence it may be advisable, as I have said, for the couple to choose one form of religion, preferably the one which has the stronger claim on at least one of the partners. Then the children will grow up in an environment which will be normal and not abnormal. Of course, the children will sense the fact that their parents have diverse precedents. For, after all, they will have two sets of grandparents. As one youngster, product of an intermarriage, said in December when we were having both Christmas and Channukah, "I have some grandparents who are trees and others who are candles." For those couples who have no strong link with their ancestral faith but who derive from different backgrounds, an interesting adventure would be—while they are engaged—to go "church shopping." Let them go to various worship services to investigate and see if any has a special appeal for them. Then the couple may opt for the religion of its choice. That kind of looksee is certainly more practical for mature people than for children.

When thou wouldst cheer thy heart, think upon the good qualities of thy associates. —Marcus Aurelius

EQUI-DISTANT AS TOUCH

Carla Patsuris

A carapace
touched
by rippling muscle-flex
testing its own
Eternal Flame;
a slightly opened shell,
like lidded myopic eye
lifting for an instant,
settles back
Ignited.



SEARCH FOR MYSELF

Ethel Peak

I watched the meadow grass
bend in morning wind,
saw it bow low
as though
to take a blessing from the sun.
The sound of rustling grasses
was to me a whispered prayer
and there
I was aware
of an ache to kneel with them.
Then I knelt in self-surrender
and knew my search was at an end.

THE NEW OPTOMETRY

Francis Merchant

A SCHOLAR paused at a shop on a busy street, eyeing a large sign with the word *Optometrist* on it. He opened the door, went in, and saw a shrewd-faced man behind the counter.

"What can I do for you?" the shopkeeper asked.

"I've been reading a good deal lately," said the scholar, "and I fear that I have strained my eyes somewhat. Can you give me a test to find out whether I need glasses to correct my vision."

"In the past we used to correct vision," the optometrist replied, "but now we alter it."

"What is the difference?"

"I can see you haven't kept up with the times," said the optometrist briskly. "We used to provide people with spectacles so that they might see what is set before them, but now we fit them out with lenses that show them not what is there but what they would like to behold. It's much better that way, I can assure you."

"I'm interested in seeing objects as they are," retorted the scholar, "not what I'd like to see."

"Ah, but you're wrong," said the optometrist, shaking his head sadly. "You're missing most of the joys of living."

"How is that?"

"What you would like to believe is so much more satisfying and agreeable than the bare reality. For example, a man came to me this morning and said he was becoming disturbed by the wrinkles that were increasingly apparent on his wife's face. I gave him lenses that screen out the wrinkles so that he won't see them. What is the result? Now he is a happy man. Last week a business man came to me who was having indigestion whenever he watched TV programs. The spectacles I prescribed changed the situation completely and he can now watch TV day and night, yet remain merry and light-hearted."

"That may be," exclaimed the scholar, "but I don't want

my vision altered. I want to see reality as it is."

"Why oppose progress?" queried the optometrist. "We can make the ugly appear beautiful, the reprehensible, praiseworthy, the disagreeable, pleasing. Many of my customers have assured me that they would have had nervous breakdowns, if we hadn't adjusted their vision. Mental patients in hospitals by the thousands have been set free shortly after they put on the new kind of spectacles. If that isn't progress, then I don't understand what it is."

"Look here," cried the scholar a bit impatiently, "I'd like to have old-fashioned glasses that will enable me to see the world as it is."

"Then I must tell you," returned the optometrist, his voice rising, "that you are out of tune with the times. We serve thousands of people here, and you are the only person who has found reason to object to our standardized procedures."

"Do I understand, then, that you refuse to serve me?" the scholar demanded to know.

"Not at all, sir," replied the optometrist. "You are asking for something that has gone out of style, and we no longer carry the line of spectacles on which you insist. In fact, we would lose money if we did."

The scholar was silent for a moment. "If I'm the only person who wants to see reality," he said, "the world must be in a sorry mess."

"You are sadly mistaken," the optometrist declared. "The world is happy, and you are sad. With the proper spectacles you would see everything in a different light. Come, now, won't you let me prescribe for you?"

"No, thanks," said the scholar shortly as he strode decisively out of the shop.

In opening ourselves to God's influence our greatest destiny is fulfilled. —William James

FOUNDATIONS

Cornelia Bagarotti

FOUNDATIONS are the invisible links between the present and the future. Before the tree can grow, it commences as a seed. In Man's life the seed is the foundation laid years in advance. The seeming obstacles, detours, tragedies are but the natural deflection toward the chosen path of development in this life. As you study the lives of great men, you see how all this is accomplished. John Muir's coming to America, his being temporarily blinded, his becoming ill when he turned his energies to business. . . all these were to guide him back to his chosen field of creativity for his own good and that of America and the world. And so it is in each of our lives on a minor or a major scale.

Therefore trust in the divine guidance and the good of personal destiny despite any seeming darkness or sadness or tragedy. You cannot see the rug the weaver is weaving nor the grandeur and beauty of the design. To you is given only a momentary fragment.

Remember lives touch your own and then pass on. When you have given the aid, the impulse that is needed, you go on. Relationships exist so long as there is a mutual need or growth. They are terminated when that need is ended. Like the tides of the sea they ascend and then draw back. So be not dismayed to see how many you have known in this lifetime who have withdrawn from your sphere of daily life. It is so meant to be. Pass on to others as yet unhelped as yet unknown. It is for their good and yours as well. Never fear to let go of the old. But enter joyously into the unknown present which awaits you all.

There is no lovelier way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark. —Helen Keller

Nina Willis Walter

WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN, if I do, I am going to be vastly annoyed if all I am offered is a chance to walk on golden streets and wear little white wings and play a harp.

Of what value is gold if you can't spend it? And who wants streets, anyway? I would much rather have dirt roads and green grass and lazy rivers and time just to sit in the sun instead of walking around on any kind of street.

As for playing a harp—will I have to take lessons? If I must be in the heavenly orchestra, I'd rather play the piccolo. I hope we don't have to play anything. I really look forward to the absence of noise and the necessity of making it.

Now, about wings. Why, in heaven's name—or heaven's skies, if there are such things—must we engage in do-it-yourself flying? If mankind can invent a huge jet plane for earthly travel, surely heaven can come up with something bigger and better. No, thank you. Don't bother me with wings.

When I get to be an angel, do I have to sit around and do nothing all the time? There is no satisfaction in that. Ask the idle rich, or the senior citizens who have been forced to retire even when they weren't ready and didn't want to.

All that isn't heaven to me. To the devil with those old cliches! Here's what I believe about heaven:

Heaven is not one big, beautiful reward for being good by someone else's rules—a reward I have to die to get. It is all around me, here and now, and I can have it if I want it—but not all at once. If I could get it all at once, there would be nothing else to live for. I must learn to recognize the pieces, to gather the pieces, and to put the pieces together like a jigsaw puzzle. I have already found a few of the pieces.

The first piece consists of inner satisfactions, especially the satisfactions that come from achieving a goal, however small, and from using creatively whatever talents I have.

The second is a special kind of joy—the joy of realizing that I have fulfilled my obligations with honor, that I have met a crisis with courage, that I have given another person a moment of pleasure.

The third is peace of mind—the peace of mind that comes from knowing that I have given my best to the day, to the creative activity in which I am involved, and to the people who need me.

I am sure that heaven has other joys and satisfactions to offer here and now, in this life, not in some mythical place with streets of gold. I am sure that I can find other pieces to my jigsaw puzzle and have a little bit of heaven in my life while I am still around to enjoy it.

PINK CLARITY

Susan Walden

And the rose stands up proudly,
declaring that life IS beautiful.
Pink, and defiant, it challenges
the cynics:

Those who, armed with facts,
would remove the richness
to bare the cold reality,
leaving an emptiness —
smug in their 'victory' over
illusion.

As I look at the rose,
I could swear I see a wink
as its fragrance whispers,
"THEY are the deluded ones!"

"THY WILL BE DONE"

Irma Dovey

HAVE YOU EVER tried to explain this phrase? I was teaching second grade shortly before my father's death. A child stopped on her way to the playground to ask me something. I remember the incident with a feeling that it was meant to be, that Christ was directing my thoughts. It was evident that Ila was familiar with the Lord's Prayer. She stopped and looked at me squarely and asked, "What does it mean, 'Thy will be done'?"

I stammered over an answer, knowing that the question might mean more to me than to her. I was grieving over the serious illness of my father, and wondering about continuing care for my mother in a town a hundred miles away from me.

I don't know what this question may have meant to a seven-year-old. I only know that she seemed sent to me with her words. As I tried to accept the inevitable in my life, her words came back to me again and again.

"You can't tell Ila," I thought. "You have to tell your self what it means."

It was like a touch of the Holy Spirit as I struggled to pray, "Thy will be done."

PASS IT ON

Adora Jones

WHEN my mother died, I was astounded by the kindness and thoughtful acts of many, many people. In visiting someone older and wiser than I, I asked, "What can I ever do to repay all this kindness?" The answer came promptly, "You can't—just pass it on!"

I have tried hard to make this an integral part of my philosophy.

God's grace is like this. The more I receive, the more it benefits me, but also the more I must pass it on. The more love I give to others, the more of God's grace I receive. It's a never-ending, widening circle.

The center of this circle is like the eye of a hurricane. I am able to remain calm and serene while I make waves which I hope will catch and bring other people to the tranquility that is found in God's love.

It does not seem hard to do. When thanking someone for being such a good friend, she said, "To have a friend you must first be a friend." In other words: "Pass it on."

LOVE IS AN HORS D'OEUVRE

Ruth Reyna

LOVE is the hors d'oeuvre of the marriage feast, a delicate spiritual antipasto marinated in social expectations and served as a prelude to the matrimonial entree. It may require a lengthy, intricate process of preparation, the following of some special recipe by the young and inexperienced, or it may be a collection of pungent morsels cast together by more mature and more experienced hands. Whatever the preparation, it is a welcome adjunct to man's spiritual table.

Love is life itself shared evenly and calmly and completely. It permeates the soul with happy anticipation of sharing with another the hazardous contingencies of life. It meets with majestic serenity the undulating turmoil of life's uncertainties, and shares without reservation ill-fortune and misadventure, at once imparting a sanctity to the sharing.

Without love there can be no holiness, no virtue, no usefulness, no purpose in living. Without love deeply imbedded in the spirit man ceases to be spiritual and lives as a purely carnal being apart from the rest of mankind.

Love is the moral mainstay of man, the stimulus for his efforts toward survival, and the recompense for his determination to be a fitting member of the human family.

WHEN TIME STOOD STILL

Margaret Poynter

ONCE IN A WHILE there is an oasis in the desert of everyday living. These memorable moments usually occur unexpectedly, and will probably never be repeated. They just remain there along the way to look back upon and savor.

One such time occurred when my husband and I and our two small sons took a spur-of-the-moment trip to the desert. Having arrived, we located a motel off the road and then went for a drive.

As we rushed along the road, we succumbed to an urge to stop and look at the landscape. Stepping out of the car, I held my breath. Desert nights are almost unearthly. I was struck by the awesome beauty of a sky in which every star was clearly visible and stood out against a background of ebony velvet. It was a heavenly jeweler's showcase full of diamonds.

But astounding as the sky was, even more impressive was the complete and absolute silence. The whole effect was almost painful in its beauty. None of us spoke or moved for several moments. I was sure the boys had never "heard" complete silence before. It was like being on the surface of a far-off planet, suspended in time—no humming of traffic, no wind, not even the chirping of a cricket.

The boys wanted to take a flashlight and go exploring. They seemed to be fascinated by the expanse of land and by the shadows and silhouettes of the desert plants. Two small explorers trudged forth to meet the unknown. All my husband

and I could see of them was the frail beam of the flashlight. Even that became faint, and soon they were swallowed up in the darkness.

As much as I hated to break the spell, I shouted to the boys to come back. When they did, they were flushed with adventure and the knowledge that they had conquered a small bit of the unknown.

When we returned to the car and my husband started the engine, I felt as if we had just returned from a timeless journey.

TEN YEARS have not dimmed the memory of that perfect experience, when the four of us were alone on the surface of that vast land. It seems that for a moment we had stopped the rush of time and plucked a few seconds of eternity — a few seconds that will always belong to us alone.

THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD — AN OUTLINE

Gail White

SINCE I first read *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* several years ago in Evan-Wentz's translation, it has been one of the significant books of my life.

Centuries before our current interest in the subject, the Tibetan monks made a serious study of human consciousness at the point of death. By applying pressure to the arteries and controlling breathing patterns, they were able to prolong this consciousness and even to question the dying person about his psychic experiences. The insights thus obtained are reflected in the book they call *Bardo Thodol* ("The State of Liberation Through Hearing") which is read to the dying person or the corpse to assure salvation. The book relates the experiences

encountered by the soul (or self) on its journey from death to liberation, or to rebirth in the world.

The after-death experience has four stages:

1) The moment of illumination. Just at the moment of death, everyone, no matter what his ultimate destiny, has a glimpse of the perfect state of being (Nirvana, or union with God), experienced as a luminous light-filled void. The self that has become perfect through meditation and good works will recognize his identity with the bright light, achieve liberation, and remain in this joyful state. Those less perfect will fall away to other states of consciousness.

2) The "Bardo" (intermediate state) of the peaceful deities. The wandering soul will behold five beneficent deities and their consorts, representing virtues of wisdom and compassion. The master of right meditation will recognize the light emanating from these deities as the light of his own soul, and thus be saved. The less learned but devout soul will pray to the deities and take refuge in their compassion, and be saved in this way. But the soul that is held back by a lifetime of evil practices will not be saved in this realm.

3) The "Bardo" of the wrathful deities. The soul that passes into this realm will find the gods and goddesses in their fearful aspects. The gods drink blood from human skulls, devour the entrails of human corpses, and pursue the terrified soul with implements of torture. Yet even here, if one recognizes the wrathful powers as projections of one's own mind, it is possible to be liberated and saved.

4) The gate of re-birth. After passing through the realm of torment, the soul will long to take refuge once again in a body. Visions of earthly life will come to the soul, and it will be drawn toward re-birth as a man, animal, or ghost. Even now, by intense concentration, the soul can prevent re-birth and remain in one of several spiritual regions; but most souls that have come this far will inevitably be drawn back into *samsara* (the realm of birth and death: mortal life).

WHAT is the message of this esoteric doctrine, long hidden in

the mountains of Tibet, for westerners? Beneath the exotic trappings, the deities and so forth, lies a fundamental mystical truth: that the soul can achieve its freedom from sin and mortality by recognizing its identity with the divine principle. Such recognition will enable the soul to understand its experiences in the next world as its own projections, and to pass through them to the ultimate reality beyond.



THE BLESSING OF AARON

(Numbers 6: 22-27)

Ruth N. Ebberts

When Aaron served his people as their Priest
 He sought to unify, inspire and mold
 A concept that involved a holy feast
 And rituals for a cleansing. We are told
 That Aaron was a type —; a Higher One
 Is Jesus come to offer Bread and Wine.
 The board is spread, the Supper is begun:
 We eat of Him and live . . . The candleshine
 Is on all priestly garments, and the Cup
 In His remembrance teaches us anew
 He is the Very Bread . . . He offered up
 A sacrifice of love for me and you.
 Tonight let candles burn and chapel bells
 Recall the story that the Priesthood tells. . . .

DURING A RECENT WAR (An Overheard Conversation)

Louise Kidder Sparrow

ON THE TRAIN this morning I overheard a unique conversation. Two young women sat just behind me—let us call them Polly and Jo. As we left the train at Grand Central Station, I was able to see their faces. Polly was extremely pretty and alert, blonde and vivacious. Jo was fine-looking in a calm, mature way, with thoughtful dark eyes.

POLLY: Why should all women aid and abet men in their horrible wars? Fully half of the world's population are women, and none of them ever want wars. Why should half of the world force misery on the other half as well as on themselves, just because men cannot learn how to behave and be decent with each other?

JO: What can we do about it?

POLLY: We've got brains supposedly for use. What can we do? Well, we could refuse to have children.

JO: Only a few would do that.

POLLY: We could refuse to help the men until they learned to live together on the same little planet in peace.

JO: Only a few would do that.

POLLY: We could, as a real protest, commit mass suicide. It's what the best men are doing today.

JO: Talk sense, Polly.

POLLY: All right, here's another idea. We can stand by and, in spite of all our efforts, watch the world become depopulated of its men, the flower of every nation, until, as a result, the world becomes matriarchal. All the money, all the jobs left in the hands of young and capable women.

JO: There'll always be enough men, such as will be left, to carry on.

POLLY: There'd be more women with growing power and experience. Queer that men seem to overlook this aspect of their wars.

JO: And could the women run the world better than the men have?

POLLY: They would have a hard time running it any worse. Just look at it!

JO: Polly, you're not in a sweet mood this morning.

POLLY: No? Well, perhaps it's because uniforms and medals seem so silly to me now, with Bob gone — and all our happy plans. . . ."

JO: Chin up. You're not the only one.

POLLY: Think of the thousands! Why can't nations be decent and act like real men and not like street-boys picking quarrels and throwing mud and calling names and making faces at each other? Won't they ever grow up and behave like human beings? Be fair and generous and kind and reasonable?

JO: It's the individuals in each nation who must mature first.

POLLY: A little leavens the loaf. It's always a minority who must lead. To my mind the best thing we can do is to help win the war, help the few who are working for a just peace, for real World Organization after this war is won, so there can never be any more wars, as there surely will be unless we have a strong World Union of Freedom-Loving Men. You know an adult chapter is being formed for Wednesday nights. Will you come?

JO: *Will I?* What time?

POLLY: Eight o'clock in the high-school auditorium. The boys and girls are ahead of the grown-ups this time. They already have their chapter in full swing.

I quietly made a mental note of the place and time, determined to see those young women again. As Polly said, our brains are made for use supposedly, and now is the time to use them! We must all become planetary citizens.

OUT OF THE WEB

Arthur W. Muller

THERE ARE MANY WAYS to spend a Sunday afternoon. Some folks go for a drive in the country; others may relax in the park, while a few visit with friends or relatives. It has been widely publicized that walking is a lost art, but I am certain that there are still many lovers of the outdoors who prefer strolling to riding on pollution-filled highways. Not having the luxury of a car, my family is contented with the former pleasure.

It was on a beautiful day in spring that my wife, my son and I went for a short leisurely stroll through our small town. We especially delighted in hearing the birds singing as we approached a large private garden with many colorful blooms. But nearing a secluded area just a few yards to the right of the house, we came upon an excitable flock of blackbirds grouped in a wide circle beyond the cyclone fence who were not making harmonious sounds.

Upon closer scrutiny, I understood the reason for the boisterous din. One of the blackbirds was caught in the wire mesh of the fence. Realizing that I must release this unfortunate bird, I took my handkerchief out of my pocket and carefully covered my fingers with it to keep from being scratched. As he saw me coming to help him, the bird stopped his frantic calls. I gently grasped his claw and removed it from a small angle of wire and set him free. Upon the instant of his freedom, he and his stead-

fast pals sped away in such terrific haste that we all stood staring in amazement.

In the evening, when I was relaxing after dinner, I began to think of that unlucky creature caught in the web of wire. My thoughts then turned to our human brothers who are enmeshed in webs of sin, hate, and revenge. How long, I pondered, would it be before they are rescued from their plights? Yet many of them can find freedom from bondage by renewing their outlook on their past lives and pledging themselves to seek love and peace and hope. No web is strong enough to hold them for life in states of sin. Prayer will soften the strands of the engulfing evil and gradually bring comfort and freedom to their lives.

EVENING

Eleanor Ebersole

Autumn gathers in its own:

In the mist it enfolds
the brilliant marigold, the
ripening walnut, whole, green
and browning, the rose,
what's left of August corn,
the sunflower, bowing,
spider, woodchuck, mouse,
the ancient hedgerow tree,
the silent creek,
a sparrow's song.

Autumn gathers in its own,
and neath its golden light
sets them to rest for night.

INTERIOR GRACE

Nixeon Civile Handy

Admit the brotherhood we feel
 is candidly external; we knock
 at other's door to service
 our own need, wait on a sick man
 in our own neighborhood; dig in our
 pockets, display our contributions;
 assess ourselves as getting into motion
 the "beautiful spirit of brotherhood."

Where is the joy? then, pasted on?
 Truegiving springs from within, offers
 ourselves without applause.

CHURCH

Martha Bower

Church is mysterious.
 The incense, the candles,
 And the statue of the blue girl
 Lull me into a sense of safe security.
 There is a touch of the Orient here
 That seeps into my northern soul
 And whispers, Easy, easy, child,
 Easy, child, you are quite safe
 Here, with me,
 In this mysterious sanctuary.

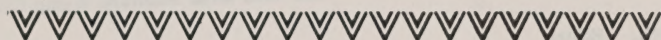


NOTICES & COMMENT

WAS YOUR OCTOBER ISSUE LATE? If so, we are very sorry about it. It was not our fault but that of the postal service as a result of a strike by United Parcel.

PRICE HIKE COMING. Although the Fellowship has done all it can to keep down the subscription-rate, the cost of everything required to put out a publication has gone on rising. So we are reluctantly announcing that as of January 1, 1977, the price of one year's subscription will be five dollars.

GIVE FIP FOR CHRISTMAS. We are hoping that this year members will do what so many did last December—give subscriptions to their friends for the holidays. Take advantage of the old rate while it still holds. *And do it early!*



PRAYER

Richard Ward

Prayer, like water,
nourishes tiny
seeds of our human
love and concern for
God's love to heal us.

Prayer, like tears, can
take the hurt out of
hearts whose forsaken
lovers did take the
sunshine from the day . . .
leaving a void there.

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GREAT SPIRIT

Jean Moore Smith

Great Spirit, One who makes the setting sun
to form a sparkling golden path
upon the dark green sea,
Help me to do my best and worry not
but trust the rest, the solving of
problems that vex, to Thee.